

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 EA-11 NEA-14 ISO-00 IO-14 SAJ-01 OMB-01 NIC-01

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1050

INFO CINCPAC

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

USMISSION USUN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MOSCOW 11367

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652 XGDS

TAGS: PFOR, CH, UR

SUBJ: SOVIET VIEWS ON ASIAN QUESTIONS

REF: PEKING 1188

1. SUMMARY. MIKHAIL KAPITSA, CHIEF OF THE MFA FIRST
FAR EASTERN DIVISION (CHINA), MADE THE FOLLOWING MAJOR
POINTS IN TALKING WITH NEW ZEALAND DIPLOMATS IN MOSCOW:
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A. AT THE UN, THE SOVIETS WOULD SUPPORT NORTH KOREA BUT PYONGYANG HAD APPARENTLY NOT YET DECIDED ON ITS TACTICS; SIHANOUK'S GRUNK WILL HAVE CHINESE AND SOME THIRD WORLD SUPPORT BUT WILL HAVE AN UPHILL BATTLE TO GAIN A SEAT.

B. ON SINO-SOVIET QUESTIONS, ILYICHEV TOOK NO NEW PROPOSALS TO THE RESUMED SINO-SOVIET BORDER TALKS; THE BEST LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIP THAT KAPITSA COULD ENVISAGE WAS ONE SIMILAR TO THE SOVIET-EAST GERMAN MODEL;

C. THE RUMORED WORLD COMMUNIST CONFERENCE HAD NOT YET REACHED THE STAGE OF CONCRETE PLANNING; AND

D. THE PRESENT CAMPAIGN IN CHINA WAS, IN KAPITSA'S VIEW, AN EFFORT BY MAO TO STRENGTHEN THE "SHANGHAI GROUP" AS HIS LONG-TERM SUCCESSORS TO POLITICAL LEADERSHIP.

2. ACTION REQUESTED: AMBASSADOR HARLAND REQUESTED THAT U.S. MISSIONS IN HONG KONG, PEKING AND WELLINGTON PASS COPIES OF THIS REPORT TO THEIR NEW ZEALAND COUNTERPARTS. END SUMMARY.

3. W. BRYCE HARLAND, ACCOMPANIED BY BRIAN S. LENDRUM, NEW ZEALAND'S AMBASSADORS TO PEKING AND MOSCOW RESPECTIVELY, CALLED ON AMBASSADOR STOESSEL ON JULY 22 TO DISCUSS THEIR CONVERSATION WITH KAPITSA HELD EARLIER THAT DAY. KAPITSA

HAD IMPRESSED THEM AS BEING SHARP, WELL-INFORMED, CORDIAL AND GENERALLY FREE OF IDEOLOGICAL BLINDERS.

4. ON UN QUESTIONS, KAPITSA INDICATED THAT THE SOVIETS (AND THE CHINESE) WOULD SUPPORT NORTH KOREA IN WHICHEVER COURSE IT CHOSE TO FOLLOW. THUS FAR, HOWEVER, PYONGYANG HAD NOT DECIDED ON ITS TACTICS AND WAS AWAITING A REPLY FROM THE U.S. ON ITS OFFER OF DIRECT TALKS. WHETHER THEY REALLY EXPECT A FAVORABLE REPLY IS NOT KNOWN, BUT THIS IS THE REASON THEY GIVE FOR NOT HAVING DECIDED YET ON THEIR APPROACH AT THE UN. IN CONFIDENTIAL

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ADDITION, SAID KAPITSA, THE CHINESE WILL SUPPORT THE EFFORT TO HAVE SIHANOUK'S GRUNK SEATED IN PLACE OF THE GKR AS CAMBODIA'S REPRESENTATIVE. IT IS NOT CLEAR YET WHETHER PEKING PLANS TO LEAD THE FIGHT, OR TO LEAVE IT TO SOME OF SIHANOUK'S THIRD WORLD FRIENDS LIKE THE ALGERIANS. IN ANY CASE, KAPITSA FELT THAT THEY WOULD HAVE AN UPHILL BATTLE. (HARLAND PERSONALLY DOUBTED THIS.) THE QUESTION WAS NOT COMPARABLE TO CHINA'S OWN CASE, WHICH

WAS SUPPORTED BY THE WEIGHT OF LONG-TERM TERRITORIAL CONTROL.

5. ON CAMBODIA GENERALLY, KAPITSA REFLECTED MOSCOW'S NON-COMMITTAL APPROACH. HE VIEWED PEKING'S RECENT WOOING OF KHIEU SAMPHAN AS AN EFFORT TO FORCE A WORKABLE MARRIAGE BETWEEN THE KHMER ROUGE AND SIHANOUK, AND THE DIRECT PRC AID AS AN ATTEMPT TO WEAN KHIEU AWAY FROM HANOI'S DOMINATION. HE AGREED WITH HARLAND THAT PEKING PROBABLY FAVORED A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT, BUT THE KEY WAS WHETHER KHIEU FELT THAT MORE WAS TO BE GAINED BY A SETTLEMENT NOW WHICH HAD SOME ELEMENTS OF COMPROMISE, THEREBY SAVING THE U.S.'S AND LONNOL'S FACES, OR WHETHER HE PREFERRED TO KEEP ON FIGHTING IN HOPES OF WINNING EVERYTHING. IN KAPITSA'S VIEW, THE KHMER ROUGE WOULD QUICKLY BE ABLE TO ACHIEVE REAL POWER THROUGH ANY LIKELY COMPROMISE MACHNIERY ("LIKE CATCHING RIPE FRUIT"), BUT THEY WERE UNLIKELY IN THE SHORT TERM TO WIN DECISIVELY ON THE BATTLEFIELD. HARLAND'S PERSONAL ASSESSMENT WAS THAT THE SOVIETS SEE THEMSELVES AS HAVING VERY LIMITED ASSETS IN CAMBODIA AND HAVING THEREFORE DECIDED TO SIT ON THE SIDELINES FOR THE PRESENT. IN THE LONGER TERM, HE SEES THEM SUPPORTING HANOI AS THE FORCE MOST LIKELY TO LIMIT CHINESE INFLUENCE AND THEREFORE SERVE THEIR OWN INTERESTS IN CAMBODIA.

6. ON SINO-SOVIET RELATIONS, KAPITSA STATED CATEGORICALLY THAT VICE FOREIGN MINISTER ILYICHEV HAD TAKEN NO NEW PROPOSALS TO PEKING FOR THE BORDER NEGOTIATIONS. (HARLAND NOTED THAT THIS REFUTED HIS EARLIER INFORMATION FROM THE ALGERIAN AMBASSADOR IN PEKING, REFTEL.) KAPITSA SAID THAT THE SOVIETS HAD TABLED EIGHT NEW PROPOSALS LAST YEAR, BUT HAD DRAWN NO FAVORABLE CHINESE

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RESPONSE. IN ONE OF THOSE DRAFTS, THE SOVIETS HAD ACCEPTED THE CHINESE CONTENTION THAT THE MAIN CHANNEL BE THE BOUNDARY OF THE BORDER RIVERS, BUT "OF COURSE" THE ISLANDS OPPOSITE KHABAROVSK WERE ON THE SOVIET SIDE. KAPITSA CLEARLY EXPECTED NO SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS IN THE RESUMED TALKS AND SAID THAT ILYICHEV WOULD PROBABLY BE BACK IN MOSCOW BEFORE LONG. TO HARLAND'S QUESTION ON WHY ILYICHEV HAD BEEN SENT BACK AT ALL, KAPITSA REPLIED THAT IT WAS TO DEMONSTRATE THAT THE SOVIET SIDE WAS WILLING TO KEEP THE TALKS GOING, THAT THEY WERE NOT THE INTRANSIGENT ONES. TO HARLAND'S SUGGESTION THAT ILYICHEV'S RETURN WAS RELATED TO MOSCOW'S PLANS FOR A WORLD COMMUNIST CONFAB, KAPITSA REACTED WITH VISIBLE IRRITATION. HE SAID THAT THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH A MEETING WAS BEING DISCUSSED AMONG INTERESTED PARTIES

AND THAT THE SOVIETS TAKE AN INTEREST IN THE VIEWS EXPRESSED, BUT THAT ANY SPECIFIC PLANNING WAS STILL SOME TIME AWAY. HARLAND INFERRED FROM THIS UNNECESSARILY FIRM DENIAL THAT IN FACT IT WAS ONE OF THE PRINCIPAL FACTORS IN ILYICHEV'S RETURN. KAPITSA DISMISSED THE NOTION THAT THE TIMING WAS RELATED TO PRESIDENT NIXON'S MOST RECENT VISIT TO MOSCOW.

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1051

INFO CINCPAC

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

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7. LOOKING TO THE FUTURE, KAPITSA SAW NO PROSPECT

THAT SINO-SOVIET RELATIONS WOULD EVER GET BACK TO THE DEGREE OF CORDIALITY WHICH HAD EXISTED IN THE FIFTIES. SOME IMPROVEMENT WAS POSSIBLE, HOWEVER, PERHAPS TO THE STAGE OF SOVIET-WEST GERMAN RELATIONS. THE CHINESE AT SOME POINT WOULD SEE THE ADVANTAGE TO THEMSELVES OF HAVING A MORE BALANCED RELATIONSHIP WITH BOTH MOSCOW AND WASHINGTON. ALREADY SOME COOLING HAD OCCURRED WITH THE U.S. AND MORE WOULD FOLLOW IF
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THE "LEFTISTS" EMERGED AT THE DOMINANT SUCCESSORS TO MAO AND CHOU. KAPITSA AGREED WITH HARLAND THAT PEKING'S URGENT ECONOMIC NEEDS WOULD IMPELL IT TO MAINTAIN REASONABLY GOOD TIES WITH WASHINGTON FOR THE VISIBLE FUTURE IN ORDER TO HAVE ACCESS TO MODERN TECHNOLOGY, BUT HE DOUBTED WHETHER THE "LEFTISTS" ADEQUATELY UNDERSTOOD THOSE NEEDS. KAPITSA WARNED THAT THE U.S. (AND OTHERS) SHOULD BE PARTICULARLY WARY OF

CHINA'S EXPANSIONIST AIMS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA. "LOOK WHAT THEY'RE DOING IN BURMA, FOR EXAMPLE." (AMBASSADOR STOESSEL INTERJECTED THAT VICE FOREIGN MINISTER FIRYUBIN, WITH NO VISIBLE IRONY, HAD ALSO BEEN MUCH EXERCISED OVER PEKING'S ALLEGED ATTEMPTS TO USE PARTY CONTACTS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA FOR SUBSERSIVE PURPOSES.)

8. ON THE PRC DOMESTIC SCENE, KAPITSA SAID THAT BOTH MAO AND CHOU WOULD SOON BE GONE AND THAT A COLLECTIVE SUCCESSION HEADED BY TENG HSIAO-PING AND LI HSIEN-NIEN WAS THE MOST LIKELY SHORT-TERM PROSPECT. IN THAT CONNECTION, HE SAW THE PRESENT DOMESTIC CAMPAIGN AS AN ATTEMPT BY MAO TO STRENGTHEN THE "SHANGHAI GROUP" AS HIS IDEOLOGICAL SUCCESSORS AND AS THE ULTIMATE INHERITORS OF HIS POLITICAL LEADERSHIP. KAPITSA FELT, HOWEVER, THAT THE "SHANGHAI GROUP" LACKED PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE AND HE LISTED SPECIFIC WEAKNESSES FOR EACH OF THEM. HE WENT ON TO SAY, "IN YOUR CAPITALIST COUNTRIES, YOU HAVE ALL SORTS OF BUSINESSMEN AND OTHERS TO TAKE CARE OF PRACTICAL MATTERS, BUT IN OUR SYSTEM THE GOVERNMENT LEADERS MUST KNOW EVERY DETAIL, EVEN HOW TO MAKE A NAIL." IN HIS VIEW, NONE OF THE SHANGHAI FIGURES HAD THAT KIND OF EXPERIENCE. HARLAND COUNTERED THAT AT LEAST ONE SHANGHAI "RADICAL" HE HAD MET SEEMED HIGHLY CONCERNED WITH THE PRACTICAL PROBLEMS OF DEVELOPING SHANGHAI, BUT KAPITSA DID NOT REACT. IN HIS VIEW, MAO SAW A NEED TO EMPHASIZE THAT THE SO-CALLED "PRAGMATISTS" MUST SERVE UNDER THE IDEOLOGICAL TUTELAGE OF THE PARTY AND THAT THE MILITARY MUST CONCENTRATE ON MILITARY FUNCTIONS. IN STRIKING CONTRAST TO SOVIET

PROPAGANDA, HOWEVER, KAPITSA DID NOT ONCE DESCRIBE
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THE PRESENT PHASE AS A "POWER STRUGGLE" OR IMPLY THAT
HE EXPECTED A MAJOR UPHEAVAL AFTER MAO'S DEATH. SOME
TYPE OF MANEUVERING WAS INEVITABLE AND ALMOST CONSTANT,
BUT THIS DID NOT IMPLY THAT THE COUNTRY OR THE LEADER-
SHIP WOULD FALL APART. KAPITSA'S MAIN FOCUS WAS CLEARLY
ON MAO, BOTH AS A SYMBOLIC FIGURE AND AS AN ACTIVE
LEADER IN OPERATIONAL MATTERS. WITH A CLOSING CAVEAT,
HE SAID THAT NO ONE CAN FORESEE THE OUTCOME AFTER
TOWERING LEADERS FALL. "AFTER ALL, WHO WOULD HAVE
EXPECTED KHRUSHCHEV TO EMERGE AFTER STALIN'S DEATH?"

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